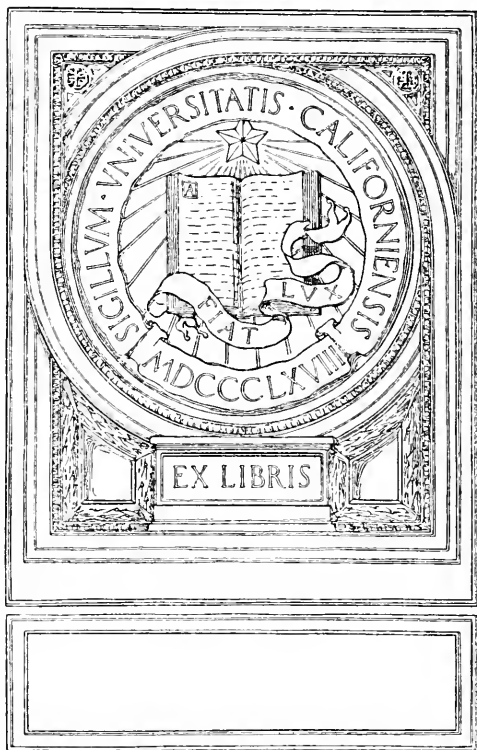


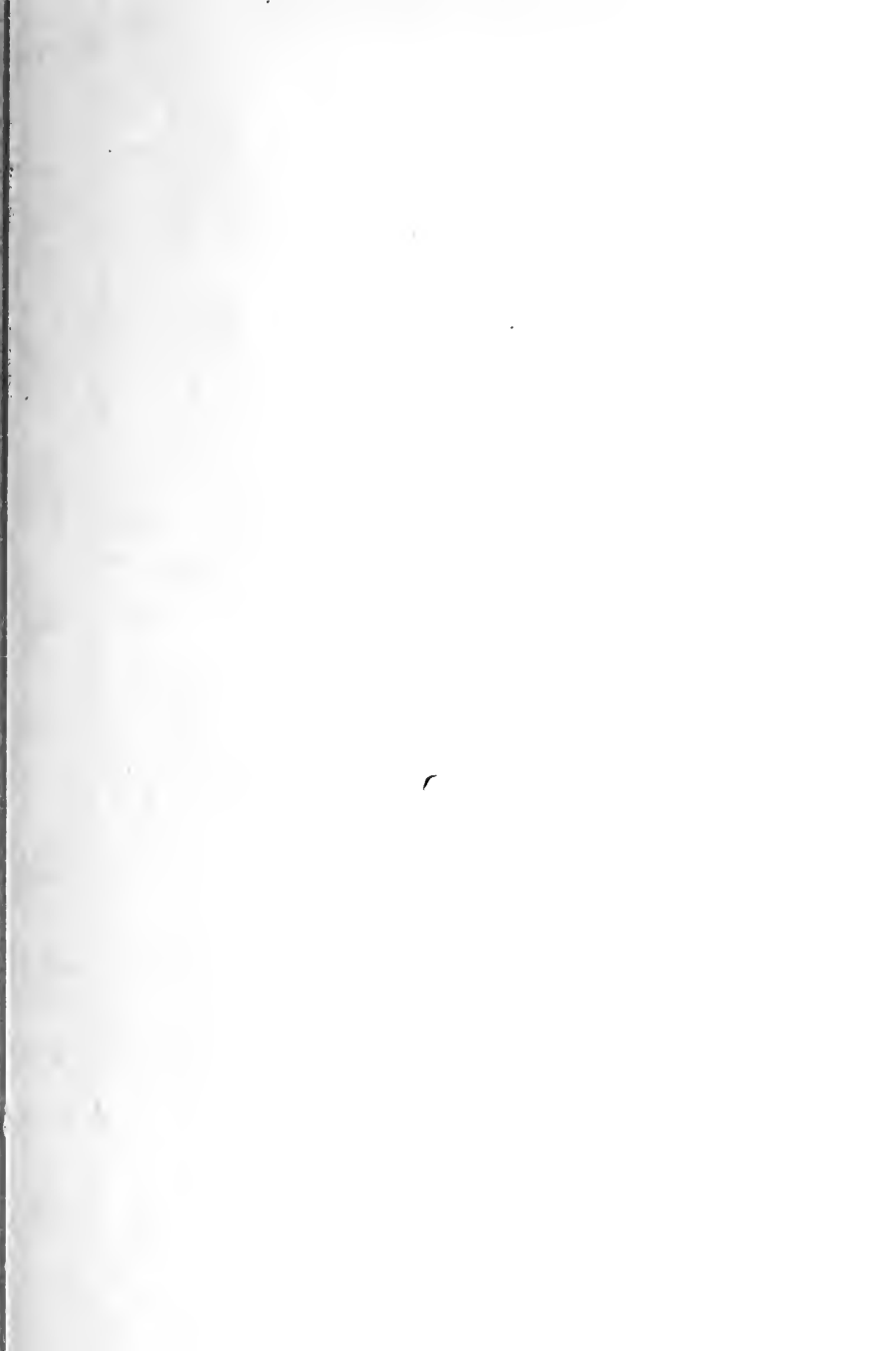
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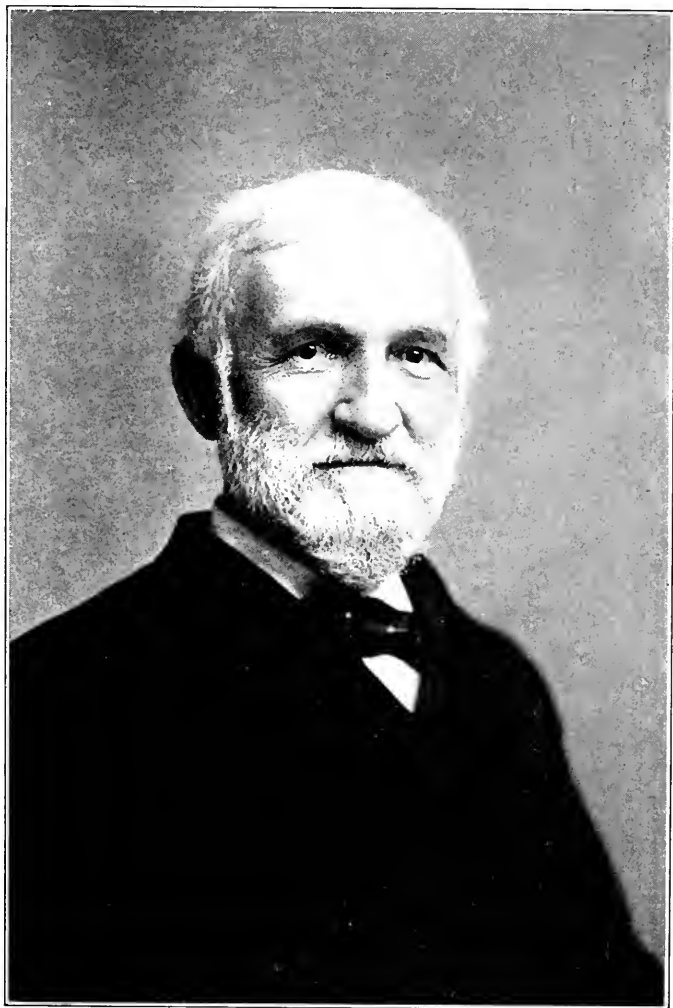
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ISAAC H. BROMLEY

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BY

NORRIS G. OSBORN



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U.C. BERKELEY

INTRODUCTION

IF those who knew Isaac H. Bromley were asked to define him in a single word they would say at once that he was a humorist. He was indeed a humorist, and sometimes, especially in the free and easy exchanges of conversation, his humor was its own and only excuse for being. But in the long series of his articles on the editorial page of the *New York Tribune* there were few which did not derive their inspiration from the serious purpose to expound a wholesome truth. A single example, drawn from the time when the Indians were an unsolved problem of government, is typical. "Nothing," he wrote, "so kindles the enthusiasm of the Interior Department as the knowledge that a Teton Sioux is wandering through Montana or Dakota in a state of savage unrest. Immediately a committee from the department goes for the Teton, finds him nomadic and discontented, says to him 'How many art thou, O Teton' and conjures him by his expectation of a lodge in the happy hunting grounds to enter into a treaty and consent to accept an appropriation from the government. Having obtained his reluctant consent to receive aid from the oppressor, the department gets an appropriation and divides it among deserving persons who support the administration on account of its admirable Indian policy." The truth and pungency of that satire are not important to the present generation, but it requires no explanation even now.

Bromley's blade was so keen and he wielded it with such dexterity that the man at whom it was directed seldom complained of being a victim, and sometimes was not even conscious at the moment that he was giving up the ghost. The innocent Governor of a great state, whose chance of attaining a still higher place vanished in the laughter which one of Bromley's articles evoked, called too promptly at the *Tribune* office to thank him for his assistance. It is a pleasure to add that the Governor himself cherished no resentment when he had become aware a little later of his own political demise.

The task of producing a daily newspaper can never have been accomplished without long hours of haste and stress, but there used to be more leisurely intervals than there are today, partly because the paper went to press much later. Those were oases in which Bromley flourished. He said at least twice as much that was worth printing as he printed. It was delightful to be interrupted by one of his divagations. "That man has the blind courage of a book agent," he remarked one day after the lingering farewell of a persistent visitor. At a time when reconstruction of the building had caused a shortage of desks he walked up to a member of the critical department who was never satisfied with merely condemning the objects of his disapproval but liked to blow them to pieces, and said: "If you are through with that desk just scrape off the blood and feathers and let me sit down." He was constantly raising a sunny ripple on the dull current of routine.

Though it was his special gift to express himself in terms of humorous exaggeration, Bromley was a singularly sane observer of the world about him. He was not dazzled by political or social bubbles, however

iridescent, and nothing pleased him better than to prick them. He had remarkable facility in detecting a sham and loved to expose it, even when, and sometimes because, exposure was inexpedient. Being a keen judge of situations and candidacies, he rarely felt even a brief enthusiasm over colors that were destined to come out in the wash. Conversely, he recognized at once the essential features of a cause or a personality which it would subsequently prove foolish to underestimate. He very seldom "dilated with the wrong emotion."

No other reputation is so perishable as that of the newspaper writer excepting that of the actor, which is hardly more so. All that the actor leaves behind him to attest his powers is the fallible and fading memory of his contemporaries. In the case of the journalist it is possible to appeal to the dusty and brittle files of the paper in which his writings are preserved for a period which the substitution of wood pulp for rags has much diminished. But it is scarcely an exaggeration to say that such an appeal is never taken. When, therefore, a newspaper writer who has exercised wide influence by means of compositions at once wise, delightful and of a wholly original flavor has finished his labors, it is fitting that the most competent of his surviving associates should put his recollections on record. That is the service which Colonel Osborn has performed in this book about Isaac H. Bromley.

HART LYMAN.

New York, July, 1920.



ISAAC H. BROMLEY

TWENTY years ago the widow of Isaac H. Bromley endowed a lecture course to treat subjects "connected with journalism, literature or public affairs." I have thought it fitting so to interpret the limitation set as to make one of my talks concern itself with the man in whose memory the course was established—a man distinguished in the profession of journalism, a wit who was a master of satire, a public speaker of great charm, a philosopher drawing inspiration from a rare knowledge of human nature, a precious comrade in the twilight hour of social relaxation.

Bromley, or "Brom," as he was familiarly known to the men of his day, was born in Norwich, Connecticut, in 1833. He was one of the nine children of Isaac and Mary—fine old Biblical names—who may be fitly described as God-fearing people. They lived in awe and reverence of the All-seeing One and yet with such kindly compassion and tolerance as the innate whimsicality of the mother and the hard practical sense of the father ensured. As in all New England households of those days, we well may believe, Fox's Book of Martyrs had an honorable place on the limited shelves of the family library.

Throughout his picturesque life, Bromley showed the effect of his early training. Though his environment in active affairs made it impossible for him to accept any one of the denominational highways to everlasting

peace as the royal road, he was a man of mature religious conviction. In the latter part of his life, he inclined to be communicative as to his views, always profoundly reverent, and in an extended expression of them to his friend, the Reverend Philip S. Moxom, made his confession of faith. It is an extremely moving document, though, doubtless, the highly trained theologian would find in it much to cause the fur to fly. The prevailing notion that men of Bromley's type and profession, by the very nature of their calling, proceed from perplexity to doubt, from doubt to cynicism and finally settle down to a state of eternal godlessness, is false. The contrary is true. They do pass through the intellectual stages mentioned but, in the end, they see clearly and radiantly because they have rid their vision of the confusing, conflicting emotions which overexcite many splendid but timid souls. Like the wits of all ages, even in their most daring flights of unconventionality, Bromley was a religious man.

On one of Lincoln's recurring birthdays he wrote in a spirit of admiring analysis:

What were those qualities? Say they were homely common-sense, knowledge of human nature, wise forecast, the instinct of justice, the conception of righteousness, catholicity of view, generosity of nature, quick apprehension of existing conditions and a broad survey and comprehension of their presages; and say, too, that he had with all these the shrewdness of the practical politician, with his readiness of resource and that apparent flexibility of purpose which seems to bend, but never yields—do all these account for him, interpret him, explain him to the gaping multitudes who yesterday stood, and today and for all time will stand, wondering why this uncouth figure holds so high a place in history? Not at all. Other men have had in greater or

less degree all these qualities and have enjoyed the opportunities for their manifestation. What, then, was the quality that dominated all these; that assembled them all; and keyed them all together in the combination that made them of the very highest service to his country and humanity, and, as apparently their merest incident, made him the greatest of his generation, the most revered and revered of all the men of his time?

What was it but that godlike virtue of patience; that divine quality of endurance which sits enthroned above all passion and all frailty and waits for Time's ripening and God's Providence?

Bromley was a member of the famous class of 1853 at Yale. His satirical explanation of how it came to be known as "the famous class of '53," under a June date line at New Haven, brought roars of rollicking banter from his classmates. He wrote in part:

There is an impression abroad—disseminated, I suspect, by the suggestive quotation marks referred to—that the class is indebted for its "famous"-ness to the fact that it numbers among its members several who have been more or less connected with the newspaper press, and that these gentlemen have seized every occasion to keep the class before the public. It would take an entire page of *The Tribune* to tell you how wretchedly and basely false is that impression—and probably two pages at least to make some people believe it. It is true that the class had from the start a leaning toward the press. It was the only class that ever published a college paper in its Freshman year. It got out but one number of it, to be sure, but that was a great number, containing besides some very remarkable woodcuts, a poem by Stedman, then aetat sixteen. Stedman began publishing a newspaper immediately after leaving college. Then there are George W. Smalley, of *The Tribune*; Delano A. Goddard, of *The Boston Advertiser*; J. Evarts Greene, of *The Worcester Spy*; J. Stoddard Johnston, of *The Frankfort*

(Ky.) *Yeoman*; Abner L. Train, who was for many years editor of *The New Haven Palladium*; and I will not deny that I have sometimes written for newspapers myself. But I hope no one would suspect any of us of setting afloat paragraphs laudatory of the class. Perish the suspicion! If our duty as journalists has compelled us to chronicle the successes of classmates, we have done it always with great modesty, only mentioning incidentally that they were members of the Yale Class of 1853; and if at any time we included our own among the names published, it was not to get notoriety for ourselves or shine by borrowed light and good company—don't think that of us—it was only to show that we knew whereof we spoke.

Before taking up the fascinating work of a journalist, Bromley read law in the office of the Honorable L. F. S. Foster, distinguished in this state, from whom he imbibed a keen relish for human problems. Later, he continued his studies of them in that school of queer political contrasts, the Connecticut General Assembly, serving as clerk in the House of Representatives and in the Senate. The influence of that experience in an institution deriving its sturdiness and inspiration literally from the soil was felt throughout his life, enabling him to detect instantly the soul back of the veneer of the city-bred iconoclast. From the halls of legislation he went to the editorial sanctum and began his brilliant newspaper career on *The Norwich Bulletin*, interrupting it to enter the Union Army. Later, he rejoined the staff of *The Bulletin*, left it to edit *The Hartford Post* and finally went where he belonged—to New York.

From 1873 until his death, in 1898, the widespread influence of *The New York Tribune* was due in large part to the sparkling personality which marked his editorial contribution. He was proof against the over-

shadowing grandeur of Horace Greeley and the charming genius of Whitelaw Reid. We may sense the delight that he took in his work and the effect that it had upon it, when we recall some of the giants of his day whose pens shattered the swords of advancing warriors in search of political stars for self-aggrandizement: The aggressive Greeley, the knightly Dana, the imperturbable Raymond, the great news pioneer; the elder Bennett, Murat Halstead, John Hay, poet and statesman; George W. Smalley, E. C. Stedman, E. L. Godkin, St. Clair McKelway, William Cullen Bryant, Noah Brooks, Willie Winter, Henry E. Krehbiel, Carl Schurz, the elder Samuel Bowles and a host of others, the echoes of whose magnificent battles for political and civic righteousness still rumble in our ears. In Connecticut there were such loyal knights of the quill, all of them known to Bromley, as Alfred E. Burr, Joseph E. Hawley, Charles Dudley Warner, Marshall Jewell, Abner L. Train, Waldo and Canfield, and Minott A. Osborn. Among the casual contributors in those days of rugged journalism in Connecticut were the Rev. Horace Bushnell, Mark Twain, the Rev. Joseph Twitchell, and our own beloved Ik Marvel. To hold one's own, as Bromley did, with that All-Star newspaper cast, was to dwell among the immortals and imbibe the nectar of immortality.

But even this achievement displays only in part the varied background of the man. Newspaper men are proverbially democratic in their social relations. They find in different atmospheres and in out-of-the-way places sources of contact which are never ending in their delight and inspiration. They seem not to fear to walk where others become foot-weary. They paraphrase in their lives the amusing directions given a cub

reporter by the seasoned veteran who presided at the city desk of one of the great dailies of the country—if my memory serves me, a New Haven newspaper genius by the name of Bogart: "If you see a dog bite a man, pay no attention to it. If you see a man bite a dog, rush to the office with all the details." The newspaper man seeks human interest wherever it lies concealed. So Bromley was at home, as only, among my precious recollections, he could be, with actors and artists; with big and little political chiefs of all tribes. Among his intimates on the stage were John Brougham; dear old Joe Jefferson, an adopted son of Yale whose honorary degree filled Bromley's heart with filial gratitude; the rollicking Billy Florence and the studious Edwin Booth; John McCullough, Lester Wallack and John T. Raymond. At the Lotus Club and elsewhere he found sympathetic companionship with the elder Bartlett, father of the eminent sculptor, Paul Wayland Bartlett, both of New Haven; John La Farge, St. Gaudens and scores of others. "I like the human family," he would explain and he was ever welcome at the fireside with kettle boiling and the rigid restraints of conventional society decently modified.

Bromley's reputation as a newspaper man rests on his skill and sincerity as an editorial commentator and correspondent. The resolution adopted by the Union League Club of New York at the time of his death proclaims him: "A knightly defender of the truth. A foe to shams and pretense." Chauncey M. Depew, in seconding the resolution, declared him to be "both a wit and a humorist," adding, "it takes a fine organization and education to understand and enjoy these gifts. He would attack a friend in public life as quickly as he would an enemy, if that friend persisted after warning

in a course which Bromley thought wrong or insincere." Bromley once said, in my hearing, to an aggrieved candidate for office whose fate had been adversely sealed by a *Tribune* editorial: "Why, my dear fellow, did you persist in parading in front of my gun?"

Depew had no reason to remember an experience of that character but he has to this day, at the age of eighty-six, the acknowledged delight of reading and rereading the uproarious rhyme which Bromley composed and read at the annual dinner of the New York Alumni Association, January 23, 1891. It is the fanciful biography of the distinguished son of Peekskill who grew to be the after-dinner orator, par excellence. I am sorry I cannot delight your ears and provoke your laughter by reading it in full, for in its riotous wit it is a classic. The opening stanza is as follows:

Bring me honey of Hymettus,
Bring me stores of Attic Salt,
I am weary of the commonplace,
To dullness call a halt!

Then follows the evolution of the orator undertaken in highly mischievous manner until we come upon these verses:

No need to describe him, you all know him well,
For what Yale alumnus hath not felt the spell
Of the wit and the wisdom,
The charm and the grace,
Upon every occasion,
Wherever the place,
He diffuses about him? It need only be said
Where he sits at the table is always the head.

Alumni and Ball Nine,
Eleven and the Crew
All throw up their hats
For Chauncey Depew.

He's been dining and speaking
For years near a score;
He has routed the chestnut,
Evicted the bore,
No table's without him,
No dinner complete;
The fun always waits
Till he gets on his feet;
Making all men his friends
Without seeming to try,
Now he prays with the pious,
Now he drinks with the dry.
Always sweet as the daisy
And fresh as the dew,
No fly ever lighted
On Chauncey Depew.

So when, as quite often,
It cometh to pass,
We practice our speeches
In front of the glass,
And the Madame, bewildered
Says: "What are you doing?"
Our only reply is,
"I'm Chauncey Depewing."

There was much in common temperamentally between Mark Twain (Sam Clemens) and Bromley. They were humorists of a different type but they were alike in the originality of their daring and innocent irreverence. Everything and everybody, except matters of religious origin, were just so much material for

their delicious humor to work upon. It is not strange, therefore, that, in the course of their travels from one set of lips to another, their witticisms, like the innocent babes made famous by Gilbert and Sullivan who were the victims of Little Buttercup's playful malice, became mixed in their reputed authorship. This was the experience of a bit of doggerel—"Punch, brothers! Punch with care!" which, at the time of its perpetration, was greatly in vogue, and to this day awakens a light of reminiscence in the eyes of those who hear it even when, as is usually the case, it is imperfectly recited.

It was early attributed to Mark in spite of the solicitous insistence of Dana in *The Sun* that Bromley should not be deprived of its authorship. I, too, in frequent appeals to a much more restricted constituency, have labored to the same end. It bothered Mark Twain also. He was in constant receipt of letters from admirers, who both expressed the delight they had taken in it and the desire to have an authenticated copy. He finally wrote Bromley in despair saying: "The next time you write anything like that for God's sake sign your name to it." The only clue I have been able to find to the misapplied credit is this. When Mark returned from a trip abroad he was given a dinner by the Lotus Club of New York at its hospitable home. The dining hall was elaborately decorated, and all about, interwoven in the decorations, were lines from the delightful skit. Through oversight or forgetfulness he omitted in his speech to disavow the authorship and, as some of Bromley's friends believe, on that account, it stuck to him from that time forth. Albert Bigelow Paine, in his delightful biography of Mark Twain, gives, with a few unimportant details, the history of

the doggerel. I am quite sure Mr. Paine will forgive me for slightly editing his tale and making it read as follows: A certain car line has recently adopted the "punch system," and posted in its cars, for the information of passengers and conductors, this placard:

A Blue Trip Slip for an 8 cents Fare,
A Buff Trip Slip for a 6 cents Fare,
A Pink Trip Slip for a 3 cents Fare
For Coupon and Transfer, Punch the Tickets.

Noah Brooks and Isaac H. Bromley were riding uptown from *The Tribune* office one night on the Fourth Avenue line, when Bromley said:

"Brooks, it's poetry. By George, it's poetry!" Brooks, who was dozing, opened his eyes and following the direction of Bromley's finger, read the card of instructions. They began perfecting the poetic character of the notice, giving it still more of a rhythmic twist and jingle with this result:

Conductor, when you receive a fare,
Punch in the presence of the passenjare!
A blue trip slip for an eight-cent fare,
A buff trip slip for a six-cent fare,
A pink trip slip for a three-cent fare.
Punch in the presence of the passenjare!

CHORUS

Punch, brothers! Punch with care!
Punch in the presence of the passenjare!

It was printed in *The Tribune*. Mr. Paine says of it: "It was an amusing and timely skit, and is worth reading today. Its publication in *The Atlantic* had the

effect of waking up horse-car poetry all over the world. Howells, going to dine at Ernest Longfellow's the day following its appearance, heard his host and Tom Appleton urging each other to 'Punch with care.' The Longfellow ladies had it by heart. Boston was devastated by it. At home, Howells' children recited it to him in chorus. The streets were full of it; in Harvard it became an epidemic."

Another illustration of Bromley's witty pen, when it went a-jingling, is entitled: "If I should die To-Night." It gave the officers of The New York Life Insurance Company rapturous delight and they saw to it that it received widespread circulation, while his intimates shook their sides with laughter over its well-aimed shafts. William H. Beers had retired from the presidency of the company and John A. McCall, had become his successor. The Archie Welch referred to was Archibald Welch, the Vice President; Edward Gibbs, the Treasurer; the Living Tuck, Dr. Edward Tuck, the Medical Examiner. The thesis of the "pome" is a desire on the part of its inspired author to promote a greater truthfulness among the agents of the company.

IF I SHOULD DIE TO-NIGHT

If I should die to-night

The New York Life would look up my account

And find by closest scrutiny the least amount

It could be held for when demand was made

For some return for all my premiums paid;

'Twould think five thousand dollars far too much

To draw from out its treasury for such

As I—if I should die to-night.

If I should die to-night

The New York Life would never think of all the years
Through which I helped support the now-departed Beers,
Nor count it more than a piece of rare good luck
That my small premiums helped as well the living Tuck,
Nor think of the long line of agents who've grown rich
Out of commissions—some small part of which
Would cease—if I should die to-night.

If I should die to-night

I cannot bring myself to think of Archie Welch
Completely overcome by grief he could not squelch;
Nor at the sudden shock the news would give His Nibbs
Who superintends the finances—the gifted Edward Gibbs.
But I should rest assured that John McCall,
Drawing his salary, would rise above it all
And never care a damn—if I should die to-night.

If I should die to-night

The New York Life would doubtless wish I were alive
For then it would not have to pay these thousand five.
If it could choose, it would not have me dead,
But keep me living, that I might be bled;
For I am more than certain that the New York Life
Would rather have me pay than pay my wife—
And that's the way I feel to-night.

If I should die to-night

'Twould not disturb the New York Life; although for
thirty years
I have been paying premiums—it should shed no tears;
Its business would go on—its sharp trustees
Continue managing its assets as they please.
They will not be disturbed to know that I am gone,
For every moment there's a sucker born.
Someone would take my place—if I should die to-night.

During a conversational hour one afternoon in the editorial rooms of *The Tribune* the veteran journalist, Charles T. Congdon, was speaking of the delightful reading he had found in Bayle's Dictionary and remarked that, if he were ever in jail, he would be quite contented with that book.

"Of course you would," said Bromley quickly. "If you had Bayle, you could get out."

The following lines were inscribed in an album owned by Mrs. John Hay, the wife of the gifted statesman, diplomat and poet who was at one time a brother journalist of Bromley's. It appeared in *Harper's Editor's Drawer* with this comment: "Could anything be more deftly done than the following, written in November last, in the album of a lady who has the felicity of having for her husband one of the brightest writers of poetry and prose in the country—a man of the very prima faciest class?"

In calm and trustful confidence the missionary sat,
While the energetic deacon was passing round the hat.

The services were over, and now had come the pause

To give an opportunity to help along the cause;

But vainly went the sexton teetering up and down the aisle—

In all that congregation no one recognized the tile.

The missionary's hat returned as empty as it went;

He'd been preaching to an audience that wouldn't pay
a cent.

O'er the parson's face there flitted a disappointed look

As from the solemn sexton his empty hat he took;

Then smiling on the audience, he returned it to the rack,

With the words, "I'm very thankful that I've got my
beaver back."

I'm satisfied that when this book comes back into your hands,
With this very feeble answer to your moderate demands,
You'll compare me with the missionary's crowd that didn't pay,
And perhaps discuss the matter with your husband,
Colonel —y;
You'll doubtless say, as o'er this page you give an anxious look,
"At least he has done better than return an empty book."
Then I think I hear the Colonel this doggerel rehearse,
And say, "Like Silas Wegg, my dear, he's done a little worse."

The following letter, written to the President of the Southern Confederacy in 1861, when the Confederate White House was located at Montgomery, Alabama, is a masterpiece of irony. Bromley was the editor of *The Norwich Bulletin* at the time, and, as the letter shows, his soul was ablaze with the passion of loyalty. He explained in the columns of his newspaper that it was written at the request of a friend "who placed the relic alluded to at our disposal. At his request we publish the letter as a matter of local interest." Any further comment on it would be indeed a disastrous attempt to paint the lily.

Hon. Jefferson Davis, President of the "Confederate States of America":

The position in which you have been placed by the action of the representatives of six newly confederated states, and the magnitude of the business in which you and your associates are engaged, have emboldened me, a private citizen of a New England State, to address you a few words in presentation of the enclosed revolutionary relic.

The associations that cluster around the birth of great events are rarely lost to history. There is no inhabited place where you may not find treasured bits of wood or stone, or consecrated soil, in all respects like other wood, and stone, and earth, except that their association with great events has made them sacred as relics, or immortalized them in history. The landing of a shipload of refugees from tyranny upon the jutting ledge of a barren coast made Plymouth Rock immortal. The bell whose tongue proclaimed the signing of the Declaration of Independence, the hall in which that instrument was perfected, and all the inanimate things connected in the minds of men with that great event, could by no formula of consecration be made more sacred than they are. The world abounds too in relics of its great men who have lived for good or evil, left their impress on the ages and become names immortal. We are not content with a mere observance of the birthdays of our heroes, statesmen, philosophers, or any of those whose names we honor, and whose memories we revere. We gather mementoes of their lives, and treasure as relics the most insignificant trifles that have been consecrated by their touch.

Every epoch in the world's history has reached forward its handful of relics to the next incoming era, and every revolution has gathered in this way the tinder in which the fire of the next has been kindled. The power of association links together great events, and it is a single train of thought that takes in Magna Charta, Plymouth Rock, and Independence Hall.

There are events of note in our revolutionary history which will readily be connected in the minds of thinking men with the undertaking in which you are engaged. True, Lexington and Concord may have no significance at Charleston or Pensacola, but I think there are memories of West Point which may not be wholly meaningless at Montgomery.

It is the fortune—good or ill as you may choose to term it—of the town in which I live, to be associated with one of the events to which I have alluded: and the little me-

mento thereof which I enclose, has a history which I think will appeal more strongly to your sympathies than could almost any other relic of the revolution.

This penholder was fashioned from a rafter in the roof under which was born, a man—more than any other of the age in which he lived—your prototype. His name figures largely in all our revolutionary history. He was a soldier, like yourself, and of the same rank in the army. His name, like yours, was synonymous with bravery. Like you, he fought well and bravely the battles of his country; never flinching from danger, but always in the thickest of the fight; impetuous and rash at times, but never cowardly, and always daring to lead “where any dared to follow.” I mean no detraction from the reputation which you have so hardly earned, when I say he was your equal in courage, loyalty, and patriotism. More need not be said. Sixty years have passed since his death, but no monumental marble bears the inscription of his name and virtues. Yet he is not forgotten. For more than half a century past, the house from whence this relic came has been pointed out to the passing stranger as the birthplace of Benedict Arnold.

I have taken occasion to present you this penholder, as a relic whose associations are linked most closely to the movement of which you are the head. Let it lie upon your desk for use in your official duties. In the “eternal fitness of things,” let that be its appropriate place. It links 1780 to 1861. Through it, West Point speaks to Montgomery. And if we may believe that spirits do ever return and haunt this mundane sphere we may reckon with what delight Benedict Arnold’s immortal part will follow this fragment of his paternal roof tree to the hands in which is being consummated the work which he began.

Hoping that you will accept this gift in the spirit in which it is tendered, I have the honor to remain

Your obedient servant,

I. H. BROMLEY.

Bromley as a newspaper worker was both industrious and imaginative. I have had access to five immense tomes in which his wife lovingly and heroically preserved his writings, and have been overcome by them, not alone because of the miles and miles of pleasurable wandering to which they beckon one but because of the immense variety of the scenes which lie along the journey, each and all picturing the life of the day as it had been unfolded to him in the ever changing hubbub of human striving. Only the historian, with his back bent to the task, or the patient and trained biographer, unencumbered by other duties, could venture to lose himself in them. A few evenings with them renewed my appreciation of the bewitching duty of keeping up with the procession, marching and countermarching, which constantly confronted but never baffled him. His was no unusual experience in the demands of newspaper service, but even the best trained of us stand appalled at his achievement—the warp and woof of it; the strength of its fibre; the blending of its colors; its stout resolution; its imperturbability and balance. Bromley was a partisan in his outlook on life, but his work was performed during a period in the history of the country when impressions were real and convictions were passions; when partisanship was not only more of a manly virtue than it is today but more warranted by the background which strengthened it.

A newspaper man in the days to which I am referring and into which the specialist had not completely penetrated, was a Jack of all tricks within the trade. Bromley's bag of tricks was full to overflowing and comprehended the legerdmain of national affairs as well as of Connecticut affairs, which never lost their fascination for him or their source of profit and power to *The*

Tribune. It was the devout wish of my friend Clark, of *The Hartford Courant*, when the proposed candidacy of Simeon E. Baldwin for governor promised the retirement of the republicans from executive power, that he devote himself to the writing of the history of Connecticut. I am quite sure that the man who undertakes that needed achievement will find these five tomes of Bromley's invaluable. Not an important or significant incident or event during the period of his wonderful oversight of us escaped his magic touch. Both in his editorial correspondence written from wherever his post of observation happened to be, and in editorials written at his desk in *The Tribune* sanctum, we find a vast fund of varied information of an enlightening and critical character—political, corporate, social and civic.

Lovers of political history will find much to engage them, both in the figures to which his work introduces them and in the archives to which they will find themselves driven in their delight. Through favor and disfavor, partiality and impartiality, we see, through those writings of his, the men of Connecticut who, battling for their conflicting beliefs, kept the state for a generation among the debatable states North and Northwest of the Mason-Dixon line—New York, New Jersey, Indiana and Connecticut. They were splendid fighters and splendid citizens, whose opinions and not their personalities provoked opposition. We see again, in the smoke of battle, Hawley and Platt, Eaton and Cleveland, Jewell and Ingersoll, Hubbard and Waller, and a host of others surrounded by their tuft-hunting satellites who would never have been heard of, much less chronicled, had there not been work to do beneath the giant's sphere. It was at a moment when blows were being given and taken by these resolute defenders

of their faith that, as always has been the case and as always will be the case, the fair mindedness of the press was called into question. Bromley promptly met the issue in a tone of severity which is as apt today as then. He wrote:

Meantime, *The Tribune*, without making any claim as to the inerrancy or the superiority of it, takes the opportunity afforded by the occasion to say that "journalism" is upon the whole a gentleman's profession; that it is pursued by gentlemen; and that whatever trifling they may indulge in when the occasion is not serious, they bring to the discussion of a really important affair in a great emergency a catholicity and breadth of view, a freedom from narrowness and partisanship, and—if a hackneyed word may be allowed—a patriotism which at least deserves attention if it does not command the highest praise. The attitude of the press of the country in the present situation is, we venture to say, one of the most encouraging indications of the time. There are neither knuckles nor elbows in it; neither jingoism nor bluster. But it represents truthfully and accurately the temper of a nation whose greatness is in its patience.

In 1894, when the railroad strike, with Chicago as its revolving center and Eugene Debs as its pyrotechnic head, encountered the stern resistance of President Grover Cleveland, I was in Europe. On entering a hotel in Frankfort, I discovered a group of Americans, their sides shaking with laughter over a *Tribune* editorial. Instinctively I knew that it was Bromley's. It proved to be his currently famous admonition to Debs to "Stand pat," in part as follows:

STAND PAT

Eugene Debs! Will you kindly step to the door of your cell a moment for a little conversation through the grates?

We are not surprised to find you where you are. We should have looked for you in your present or some other penitentiary if we had lost sight of you entirely in the middle of your career. There was no mistaking the trail. It led there. Indeed, we said as much early last week, at a time when you had all steam on and were making more revolutions to the minute than any other Commerce Destroyer afloat; when you seemed to be having your measure taken rather for imperial purple than for prison stripes. If two or three newspapers in this town were not keeping up such an everlasting howl about the infallibility of their own foresight and the fulfilment of all their prophecies, as to bring commonplace guesswork into contempt and make the whole business ridiculous, we might even say that we told you there was a jail somewhere waiting for you. But we are not here at your cell door, Eugene, to say "we told you so," or twit you with exasperating reminiscences or point out the logical precision with which you shaped your career to its present culmination. The American people have learned through the newspapers that your first night in jail was the quietest and most comfortable you have passed since you began ordering them and their form of government out of your way. It makes them wish that, on your own account, you had gone there sooner. And though they do not quite understand how, in view of what has happened, you can rest at all anywhere, they are interested in you as a psychological study. Indeed, they are more or less interested in whatever concerns you. The description of the diamonds worn by your wife and sister when they came to visit you the other day was read by thousands of people who do not as a rule care much for diamonds; and the opinion expressed by those ladies that your salary ought to be \$20,000 instead of a paltry \$3,000 caused very general comment; especially by the wives and sisters of the men who pay the salary and who do not wear diamonds.

But these reflections are aside from our present purpose. *The Tribune* has been struck, Eugene, with the felicity of

your forms of expression and figures of speech; in which, we think, you hold over your ally, the windy and inconsiderate Sovereign; though the latter can give you odds as a long-distance, perennial and inexhaustible windbag. We have observed that in one of the numerous telegrams which you were flinging wide while you were on top of everything, in which you called upon other people to risk life and limb, personal property and personal safety, where your only investment was stationery and wind, your mandate was "Stand pat!" This phrase, we find upon inquiry, is one of the technicalities in the game of hazard which has more or less vogue throughout the country, and is very highly esteemed as a recreation in Kentucky, known as "draw poker."

Then follows a delicious inquiry into the technicalities of the game ending as follows:

Say, Eugene! That was a felicitous figure of yours when you told the fellows who were playing your game to "stand pat." Risky, to be sure. But not your risk. They were playing with their own "chips" and there was a very large "jackpot" on the table. Isn't there something they call "the widow" in the game? Were you the widow? What a "haul" you would have had if the "bluff" hadn't been "called"! It was a stiff game that you played, Eugene. But you fellows made a mistake in "standing pat" against the United States Government. For the United States Government has a great many "blue chips," and is very liable to "hold a full hand," and isn't easily "bluffed."

Bromley's wit was as sparkling as his black eyes. I used to think he would make almost any sacrifice to indulge it. He always did in my case. He once refused to take a yachting trip with me for a few days on a trim schooner placed at my disposal by a mutual friend. It was in 1887 when the tariff discussion was running high.

He couldn't go and have his joke, and he wouldn't forego his joke. In reply to my affectionate insistence, he said: "No; I'll not go. I know what you want. You propose to get me out at sea, seduce me into the cabin and prove to me that the tariff is a tax. No siree!"

At the Chicago convention in 1892 where he was the editorial correspondent of his newspaper and I a Cleveland delegate, I discovered him from my window in the hotel, one desperately hot afternoon, watching a procession of Tammany Hall braves. To beckon him to my cool rooms, I shied a bit of cracker at him. It struck him on the head and he looked up. I motioned to him to come up, which he did, in the meantime assuming an air of uncontrollable indignation. As he entered the room he fairly shrieked: "Why did you do that?" Before I could reply, he said: "I had just wagered Henry Watterson that there was not an American in the crowd. As I turned my head to see what had hit me, the Kentucky scoundrel cried out: 'There he goes!' "

In the early evening before the all-night session of the convention which nominated Grover Cleveland and defeated David Bennett Hill, a group of newspaper men were discussing the likelihood of the night's performance. Amos J. Cummings of *The Sun* and Charles A. Dana's son, Paul, were in the group. I saw that Bromley was in a mischievous mood, the more so because his old friend William C. Whitney, of the class of '63, the managing director of the Cleveland forces, had proved to him by the figures that nothing could stop the nomination of the former president. *The New York Sun* had turned its batteries on him so severely that it could never come to his support with a straight face and clear countenance. "Paul," said Bromley,

"what will your father do when the convention nominates Grover?" "I don't know," was the gruff reply, as if to avoid all consideration of the disaster. Bromley turned to Cummings, himself a wit, and inquired: "Well, Amos, how about it?" "Easy pickings," replied Amos. "He'll support the vice-president like ——— Blazes." That was exactly what happened. *The Sun* made Adlai E. Stevenson its political saint during the months that followed and predicted with ever increasing humor the number of postoffice necks that would fall into the basket after March 4, 1893, from the unerring strokes of this skilful "cervix chopper."

It was Bromley who found the word "Mugwump" in J. Hammond Trumbull's translation of Eliot's bible of Indian origin, signifying there a chief of importance, and who used it from time to time in the columns of *The Norwich Bulletin*. It remained for Governor "Tom" Waller of New London to give it its political significance, in 1884, when he satirized the bolters from Blaine as "Mugwumps," big chiefs, too big for their party.

The following extract from a letter sent his newspaper after the defeat of the Yale crew—Bob Cook's crew—by Columbia at Saratoga, reveals Bromley's saving sense of humor. The boisterous celebration of the victory had exasperated him:

I thought it was all frightfully absurd. But by and by the Yale crew came into Congress Hall and the boys in blue seized up Bob Cook upon their shoulders, and began to march and cheer and sing, and do all the other ridiculous things the Columbia and Harvard boys had been doing. And then, do you know, I lost my judicial mind, and my sense of the decorous and dignified, and began to think this exuberance of feeling was quite legitimate and proper, and

came near cheering with the boys myself. And then I took myself by the collar and led myself away to think it over. And when I had gone round myself carefully I said, "Old fellow, you don't know yourself; you're not judicial or impartial, or anything you thought you were. If Yale had won this race, the stout woman with the aggressive parasol, who cheered and squealed, would not have seemed ridiculous at all. You would have thought it all right for her to go round kissing people, and doubtless you would have danced round on the piazza and kissed her yourself. This sort of thing is not special and particular; it's general, and it's human nature; so consider it philosophically and stop being sour about it." And then I stopped having a judicial mind. You cannot do it at a boat race.

It is a shame, in the short time given me, to try adequately to analyze Bromley as an after-dinner speaker. He was always in demand but always disinclined to accept. He was, as a matter of fact, timid and over-conscientious; not sure of his sure power. Many a time has he said to me: "Be wary, my boy. If you happen to strike twelve, quit. It probably won't happen to you." He was one of the three choice Yale after-dinner speakers. The others were Depew and Judge Henry E. Howland. Each had his own method. I am sure that Bromley would agree that Depew was the greatest of the three. He, the only one living, still possesses, to a marvelous degree, the power to take an audience in hand and mold it to his own sweet purpose. Howland was a *raconteur* and less original than either Depew or Bromley. Bromley was spontaneous and fanciful in his preliminary remarks but fully prepared for serious treatment of the toast assigned him. It was this method which attracted the applause of audiences

recruited from all walks of life. His voice was mellow and resonant. Though he lacked the engaging chuckle of Taft, he knew, with true histrionic instinct, how to summon, dramatically, the relaxing interest of his hearers. He never let them stray from him farther than the fisherman does the playful trout, which confuses the click of the reel with his chances of escape.

I always have thought that he reached his zenith in his speech on "The Girls in Blue," at the banquet given "Bob" Cook by his enthusiastic Yale friends in 1887, the peroration of which ran in part as follows:

On a public occasion like this, it is upon the altar of friendship, of college friendship, deepest of all, that we lay our offerings. But none of us forgets that there is a still holier shrine, to which we come unsandalled and alone. It is there that we get our truest inspirations, our highest purposes, our best resolves. If we think we see all there is of this great drama in the movement of Kings and Presidents, Cabinets, Parliaments and Senates, or in the march of armies across the stage, we deceive ourselves. The "Girls" are there at the wings. It is for the gentle flutter of their approval and not the hoarse applause of the world in front, that the actors work and the play goes on. Once in a while a "Girl" comes out and speaks her lines. Miriam takes up her timbrel, Deborah marches against Sisera, the Queen of Sheba parades before Solomon, a swarthy Egyptian Queen paralyzes Rome, Joan of Arc saves France, Elizabeth leads England to the highest place among the nations, Victoria comes to her Jubilee year no less loved by her own people than honored by all the world. But the part of those and their like in making history is infinitesimal compared with the countless army of girls in all colors, of all ages, and all climes who walk invisible between the lines with fingers on their lips. I turn the leaves of my Triennial and forth there

issues a long procession of heroes, statesmen, sages, poets, philosophers and divines who have helped to make the world wiser and all life sweeter. They are Yale's "Boys in Blue," all honor to them! Is it an idle fancy that I catch the rustle of muslin and lace and hear the flutter of wings invisible as a great host of unnamed "Girls in Blue" float out between the Triennial's lines, making the air fragrant with tender influences and pure examples? "Girls in Blue!" Our color! Color of the star-lit vault above us and the deep sea that wraps us round. Color in which Bob Cook first dipped his dripping oar, color that fluttered in ribbon and scarf when he first crossed the line. They are Our Girls who wear it, sweethearts, wives and mothers; forever sweet, forever young, forever ours.

After all, the place to know a man, to catch him off his guard and see his soul shining forth in all its purity, is his home. There Bromley was a delight, a tease, a philosopher, a prophet, a gentle taskmaster, a kindly critic, a man of the world, as the mood seized him. To his grandchildren, he poured forth the love of his great heart in a sweetly winning manner. No engagement, professional or otherwise, could hold him from the task of trimming their Christmas tree. Standing on a ladder up among the branches—for he insisted on the largest tree the library would hold—he was the image of Santa Claus, with his white beard, moustache and hair, and his face ablaze with suppressed laughter. If ever a mature man exhibited the sweet irresponsibility of Peter Pan, Bromley did under those sympathetic conditions. In this connection I am sure you will enjoy the letter that he wrote to his grandson—the third Isaac—upon the occasion of his first birthday. It goes far to complete the pen portrait of the man in whose memory this lecture course is endowed.

Boston, June 29, 1891.

My Dear Grandson:

I congratulate you on your having reached, with so few drawbacks and so many teeth, your first anniversary. From all that I hear about you, I am satisfied that you have made an excellent beginning of the great enterprise which men call living. I am assured that, so far as the outward formalities and decorous duties of life are concerned, you have been especially observant of the proprieties and constantly mindful of the social obligations imposed upon you by the new and novel relations into which you have been so lately thrown. Your grandmother, whom you will find to be a most excellent person when you come to know her as well as your father and I do, has been very much gratified to learn that during the entire year you have been regular at your meals and have not been out nights. She believes this to be the only proper beginning of a successful career, and she desires me to assure you that the self-denial which you have practiced in this regard is certain of its reward. She learns also with satisfaction that you do not eat with your knife or make a noise in taking your soup. For, although there have been Presidents of the United States who did both without disturbing our relations with foreign governments, it is not the less true that good behavior at the table always promotes domestic peace and may sometimes prevent foreign complications. It may interest you also to know that one of the few Presidents of the United States who during his administration made the White House an example of gentle manners and fine courtesy was an intimate friend of both your grandfathers.

It is true that the virtuous qualities you have illustrated thus far may be attributed in a measure to conditions and an environment independent of any volition of your own, but I make no doubt, from what I have seen of your disposition, that they will continue to manifest themselves after your conduct shall come to be governed by your own inclination and choice. For I am hopeful, to the point of confident

expectation, that there will come to you a larger and clearer sense of the beauty and beneficence of those minor graces which contribute no less than the shining virtues to make life sweet, than any of your ancestors have enjoyed. For the trait which has most distinguished you since you came among us has been your exceeding amiability. The first two or three years of a man's experience here are of necessity very trying. He is ignorant of the language, and his circle of acquaintance is extremely limited; his freedom of movement is fettered by the diaper; his stomach is never entirely trustworthy in the discharge of its functions, and there is a constant exposure to the exasperations of the vagrant and irresponsible pin. If, under all these depressing conditions, he maintains a reasonable degree of equanimity and takes everything with that cheerful philosophy which many of us fail to learn even from the lessons of experience, he not only deserves great credit, but he gives the most encouraging assurance of a happy and useful life.

Thus far, my boy, you have accomplished this with such signal success as to be remarked with expressions of admiration by all. You have been both amiable and modest. Doubtless in the novelty of your new relations you have seen a great many things that seemed desirable to you which, for reasons you did not fully comprehend, were kept out of your reach. That you have made no outcry at the deprivation but simply looked out upon them with an intelligent interest and quiet satisfaction, is one of the signs of that greatest earthly possession, a contented mind. May you have it always, my boy. And when, by and by, the strange accents of the now unknown tongue become familiar to you, and with the gift of speech and power of utterance come hope, aspiration and trust, when, as I hope you will, you shall put this greatest gift to its highest use and looking upward say reverently, "Our Father," then play, my boy, not for anything that seems good to dull sight and low desire, but only for a contented mind. For that includes, as it is conditioned upon, all the virtues that sweeten life and lift up man.

Your name, my boy, means "laughter" and you are the fourth "Isaac" in a direct line. I think we have not belied the name, for I am quite sure we have occasioned more laughter than tears in this world, and there is some comfort in thinking that we have in a way contributed to the general joy of mankind, even though we may not have added much to its knowledge. It may be we have not taken the world so seriously as we ought, still it seems to me that he lives not unworthily who helps to lighten the cares of his fellow men, even though it be but for a moment. It must count somewhere.

So, namesake and grandson, I give you greeting on your first turning of the year. Some one else has said better than I can, what I think:

Live and be happy in thyself, and serve
This mortal race, thy kin, so well that men
May bless thee as we bless thee, O young life
Breaking with laughter from the dark; and may
The fated channel where thy motion lives
Be prosperously shaped and sway thy course
Among the years of haste and random youth
Unshatter'd; then full current thro' full man,
And last, in kindly curves, with gentlest fall,
By quiet fields, a slowly dying power,
To that last deep where we and thou are still.

Your affectionate Grandfather.

I have referred elsewhere to Bromley's varied intimacies and the freedom with which he touched elbows in whatever social groups he was found. His relations with "Willie" Winter, the distinguished dramatic critic of *The Tribune*, was of an extremely sympathetic character. Each appeared to find in the other a piece of himself. When Bromley died in the hospital at Norwich Winter was at Santa Catalina Island in the

Pacific Ocean. Under date of September 6, 1898, he printed in *The Tribune* this beautiful poem in memory of Bromley which later Stedman lovingly included in his American Anthology. The affection which shines forth from the stately verses finds its parallel in the extreme delicacy of their phrasing. A poet to compose thus must be deeply moved indeed.

I. H. B.

Died, August 11, 1898

The dirge is sung, the ritual said,
No more the brooding organ weeps,
And soft and green, the turf is spread
On that lone grave where BROMLEY sleeps.

Gone—in his ripe, meridian hour!
Gone—when the wave was at its crest!
And gentle Humor's perfect flower
Is turned to darkness and to rest.

No more those honest eyes will gleam
With torrid light of proud desire;
No more those fluent lips will teem
With Wit's gay quip or Passion's fire.

Forever gone! And with him fade
The dreams that Youth and Friendship know—
The frolic and the glee that made
The golden time of Long Ago.

The golden time! Ah, many a face—
And his the merriest of them all—
That made this world so sweet a place,
Is cold and still, beneath the pall.

His was the heart that overmuch,
In human goodness puts its trust,
And his the keen, satiric touch
That shrivels falsehood into dust.

His love was like the liberal air—
Embracing all, to cheer and bless;
And ev'ry grief that mortals share
Found pity in his tenderness.

His subtle vision deeply saw,
Through piteous webs of human fate,
The motion of the sov'reign law,
On which all tides of being wait.

No sad recluse, no bookish drone,
His mirthful spirit, blithely poured,
In many a crescent frolic shone—
The light of many a festal board.

No pompous pedant, did he feign
A dull conceit of Learning's store;
But not for him were writ in vain
The statesman's craft, the scholar's lore.

Fierce for the right, he bore his part
In strife with many a valiant foe;
But Laughter winged his polished dart,
And Kindness tempered ev'ry blow.

No selfish purpose marked his way;
Still for the common good he wrought,
And still enriched the passing day
With sheen of wit and sheaves of thought.

Shrine him, New-England, in thy breast!
With wild-flowers grace his hallow'd bed
And guard with love his laurel'd rest,
Forever, with thy holiest dead!

For not in all the teeming years
Of thy long glory hast thou known
A being framed of smiles and tears,
Humor and force so like thine own!

And never did thy asters gleam,
Or through thy pines the night winds roll,
To soothe in death's transcendent dream,
A sweeter or a nobler soul!

WILLIAM WINTER.

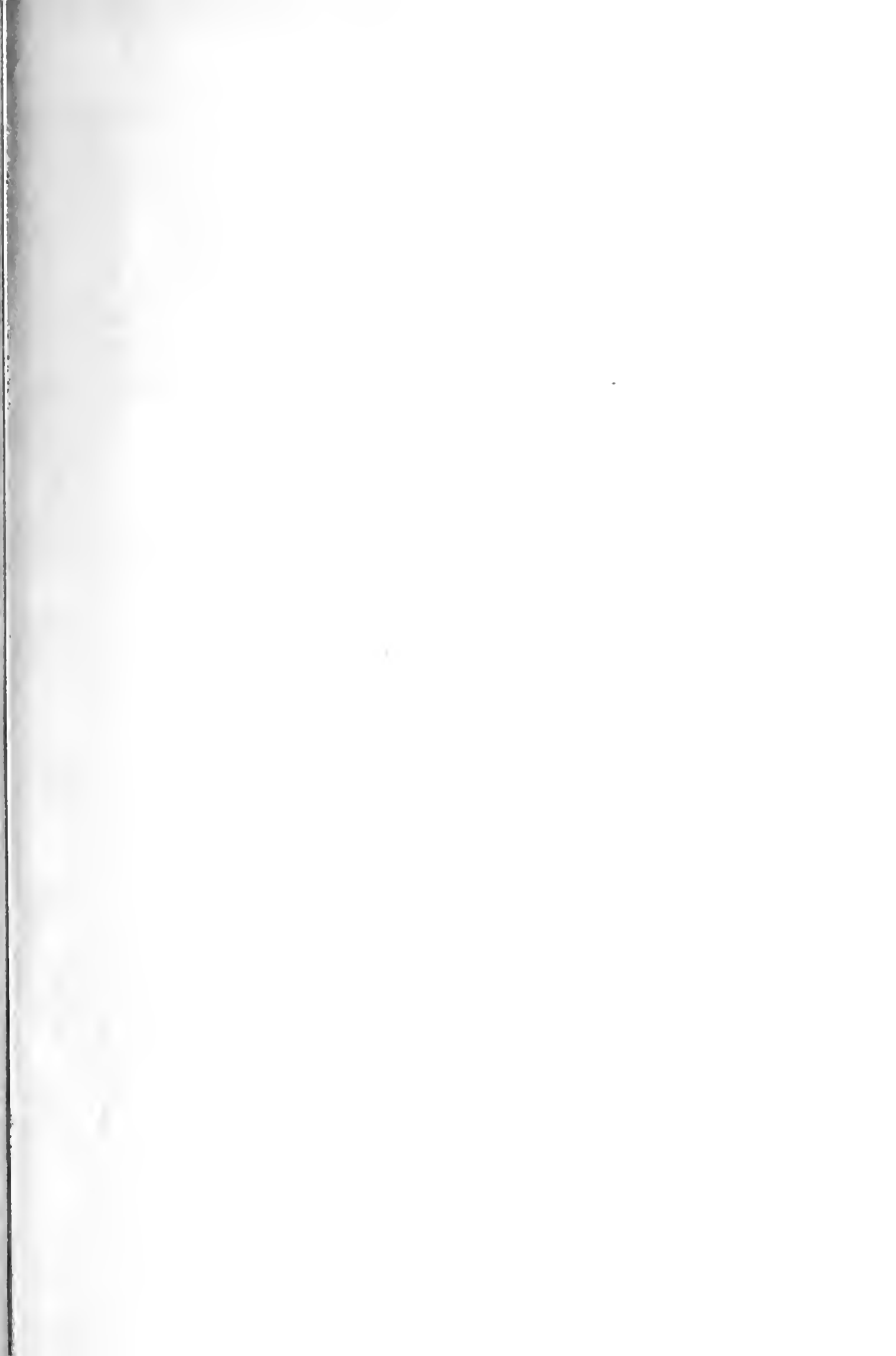
When Bromley left *The Sun*, Dana said to him: "I do not care what *The Tribune* pays you, I'll pay you more when you come back." When Charles A. Dana submitted to Bromley for criticism an editorial attack that he had written on Reid, Bromley asked: "Why hit a man on the head with a meat axe? Why not give him a lingering death with a scalpel?" "You are the only man who can do that," was Dana's mournful reply.

These are estimates of two great journalists who knew him.

I have but little authority, relatively, to add one of my own. My affection—semi-filial in its emotion—robs me of the desired poise. I had the honor to enjoy his confidence and regard. I know of no explanation that accounts for the friendship which is formed occasionally between men whose ages are so far apart. When it exists, it is of incalculable value, for a common ground is created out of the generous relaxation of reserve on the part of the elder and the free abandonment, on the part of the younger, of that feeling of shyness which so often reacts to the disadvantage of both. I was complimented when he read his editorials to me before they reached the printer's hand, responded

eagerly to his inquiring glances. I listened attentively when he chided me for literary shortcomings, and rejoiced when he saw something creditable in my point of view; anything in the printed word which he thought of possible excellence. He realized that when I went to him for advice, I wanted advice, and not a confirmation of a preconceived notion. He was a man of understanding, and it was that quality which characterized his newspaper work. I have no impression of what his success would have been as the editor in chief, though I fancy that so finished a craftsman as he would have found his patience sorely tried and his own product impaired. It was better for him to catch the atmosphere than create it; wiser in behalf of all concerned for him to improve and refine it than attempt to dominate it. There is more than one kind of masterfulness. Bromley's kind was an influence of indispensable value in an editorial room crowded with men of exceptional talent. They reacted upon one another effectively, however unconsciously, and the joint product from the printing press affected judgments and shaped attitudes to the remote distance of delivery. Such at least he seemed to me, and that I was not far wrong is proved by the reputation frankly yielded him by the men of his day and generation. Unique, his particular place has never been filled. One phase, and a brilliant phase, of journalistic accomplishment, ended coincidentally with his own earthly ending.

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